RAILWAY INTELLIGENCE.

London and Birmingham Railway.—Feb. 9th, at noon, the half-yearly general meeting of the proprietors took place in the board-room at the London terminus, Euston-grove. Mr. G. C. Glyn, the chairman of the company, presided, and in opening the meeting, alluded to the proceedings in Parliament with respect to railways, and congratulated the shareholders on the prospect that was opened for their connecting the London and Birmingham line with Lancaster and Carlisle, and in another direction with Holyhead, where a spacious harbour was about to be formed by Government. He said that the Birmingham line paid 71,700*l.* per year to Government for duties, including 16,300*l.* for income-tax, and complained of the manner in which the line was rated to local taxes and parish rates, which had been increased in the present year to the extent of 3,000*l.* Mr. Creed, the secretary, read the report. The revenue account for the last half-year, as compared with the corresponding half-year of 1842, shewed an increase in the traffic of 11,393*l.*, and a decrease of 6,221*l.* in the working charges. The directors had to report that the net profits of the year 1843 being 502,484*l.* 0s. 5d., and the dividend declared at the last half-yearly meeting 242,732*l.* 14s., there remained a disposable balance of 259,751*l.* 6s. 5d., from which they recommended that a dividend of 5 per cent. be deducted, leaving 17,006*l.* 18s. 5d. to the credit of the current half-year. The Warwick and Leamington, and Northampton and Peterborough lines were progressing satisfactorily, and the latter was rapidly advancing towards completion. The directors had to apply to the proprietors for powers to carry out the line from Chester to Holyhead, where the Government was about to erect a new harbour, and thus make it the great medium of intercourse with Ireland. Every endeavour had been made to accommodate the public, and, in order to do so, they had given to all passengers going and returning by the railway on the same day, the benefit of a reduction of one-third in their fares, and they allowed them to compound for two months' fares at half-price. They had also modified their rates to first-class passengers riding in the company's carriages, but travelling with their own carriages on the train, by charging them second-class fares. The report was adopted, a dividend of 5 per cent. declared, and 17s. on each of the 32*l.* shares of the company. A resolution was adopted, giving powers to the directors to provide capital for making the proposed railway between Chester and Holyhead, not exceeding in the whole 1,000,000*l.* sterling, and to take any other measures for the interest of the company.

The Northern and Eastern Railway continues to improve, and the dividend, the net profits return, is 5 per cent., which was the amount declared, although the directors in their report only recommended 4½ per cent. When the line is fully developed, the directors say that there can be no doubt of the shareholders receiving a dividend considerably in excess of the 5 per cent. guaranteed by the Eastern Counties Company, according to the agreement made between the two companies.

North Midland Railway.—The report declares a dividend of 2*l.* on every whole share, of 1*l.* on every half-share, and 13s. 4d. on every third-share, clear of income-tax, and then 4,966*l.* 3s. 4d. is left to be carried to the next half-year's account. The net profits of the past six months were 64,722*l.*, shewing an increase in revenue of 6,463*l.*, and a decrease in expenditure of 6,230*l.*

The York and North Midland Railway pays a dividend of 2*l.* 10s. on each whole share, and 1*l.* 5s. on each half-share, clear of income-tax. The total receipts of the half-year have been 47,594*l.*, and the expenditure 23,218*l.*, leaving about 24,400*l.* for division among the shareholders.

The Chester and Birkenhead Railway pays a dividend of 8s. 6d. per share on the 50*l.* share, and 4s. 3d. on the 25*l.* share; and this concern is now to be amalgamated with the new project of the Holyhead Railway. The terms on which the amalgamation takes place are purchasing the stock of the Chester and Birkenhead Company at par, and allowing the shareholders either to take new shares in exchange, or receive immediate payment.

South Devon Railway.—At the last meeting held at Teignmouth, to take into consideration the advantages of this railway, Mr. Brunel remarked that it appeared to the Great Western, Bristol and Exeter, and Bristol and Gloucester companies, that the South Devon line should go coastways, and he thought that any other would be injurious to Teignmouth. The South Devon line was as little complained of as any line he knew, and he had selected that line which would do the least possible injury, and which would connect the large populous towns with the metropolis, and which had secured the approbation of the landowners generally. G. S. Curtis, Esq., entirely approved of the projected line, and would support the plan. He moved a resolution, approving of the west line, which was seconded by — Watts, Esq. Mr. Curtis's resolution was put and carried.

Committee on Railways.—On Saturday last, in the House of Commons, Mr. W. E. Gladstone inquired of Mr. Wallace whether he purposed persevering with his motion with respect to the striking off the committee directors of railways and leading shareholders?—Mr. Wallace said that the course he intended to pursue was to move an instruction to the committee, which instruction he should put on the paper for to-night, declaring the principle which, in his judgment, ought to govern the House in this matter.—Mr. Gladstone said, under these circumstances, he should move the appointment of the committee.—The Speaker having read the names of the gentlemen to serve on the committee, Captain Pechell said, that he had received instructions from his constituents to oppose the appointment of directors on railways to serve on this committee.—After a short discussion, the motion was put, and the committee was appointed.

France.—The railroad question absorbs the whole attention of the Cabinet, as the Chamber of Deputies has so many interests at stake, that no opinion can be formed as to the plan which can combine the greatest number of affirmative votes. A large portion of independent deputies, scandalized at the jobs which the proposed companies sought to fix the country with, recommend the State to construct the roads, while the Minister of Finance, who sees that in order to do so he must come forward with two instalments of the loan, is anxious to decline the responsibility. Other deputies, who have a direct interest in companies desirous of making the roads, urge on the Cabinet the danger and impolicy of its attempting such an undertaking, while the personal friends of the ministers entreat that they will not let slip through their hands so fertile a source of patronage.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS.

William Wallace, LL.D., Hon. M. Inst. C.E., late Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, was born at Dysart, in the county of Fife, in 1768. From birth, fortune, or education, he derived no advantages whatever, and the eminent station he eventually occupied as a mathematician was achieved solely by his own industry and love of scientific knowledge, aided by natural talents of a high order. He was appointed, at the age of twenty-six, assistant teacher of mathematics in the academy of Perth. In 1803 he obtained a professorship in the Royal Military College at Great Marlow (afterwards removed to Sandhurst); and in 1819, upon the death of Mr. Playfair, and the removal of Mr. Leslie to the chair of Natural Philosophy, he was elected professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh.

Professor Wallace's pursuits and studies were chiefly connected with abstract mathematics, but some of the subjects to which he directed his attention may be here noticed, as having more immediate reference to the objects of this Institution.

The Eidograph, an instrument for making reduced copies of drawings, which he invented about the year 1821, and exhibited at a meeting of the institution in 1839, is considered superior in many respects to the Pentograph. It possesses greater smoothness and flexibility of motion, and while the copies may be reduced (or enlarged) in any proportion, their similarity to the original is preserved with geometrical precision. By a particular modification, the instrument is made not only to reduce, but to reverse the copies, whereby it is rendered peculiarly applicable to the purposes of the engraver.

Among the papers which he contributed to the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh," there is one on the subject of curves of equilibration, which is interesting to us on account of its connection with the theory of suspension-bridges. From the development of a certain functional equation, he deduces series for computing the co-ordinates of the catenary, and gives tables of the corresponding values of the co-ordinates so computed; thus furnishing engineers with a ready means of constructing arches having the forms of equilibrated curves.

Professor Wallace obtained a high reputation as a mathematician, at an early age, and during his whole life he laboured assiduously to extend and facilitate the study of his favourite science. Besides his contributions to the memoirs of scientific societies (chiefly the Royal Society of Edinburgh), he was the author of nearly the whole of the articles on pure mathematics in the fourth and subsequent editions of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and likewise of the greater part of those in Brewster's "Edinburgh Encyclopædia."

His health having given way so far as to render him unable to discharge his duties in the University, he resigned his chair in 1838. During the remainder of his life, although an invalid, his scientific ardour suffered no abatement, for while confined to his chamber, he composed the memoir on equilibrated curves, as well as a work intituled "Geometrical Theorems and Analytical Formulæ," which was published in 1839. His disposition was amiable and benevolent; he was beloved by his friends, and respected by his fellow-citizens; and he died, universally regretted, at Edinburgh, on the 28th of April, 1843, in his seventy-fifth year.

Mr. John Buddle, M. Inst. C. E., was born at Kyo, near Lanchester, in the county of Durham, in 1773, and resided there nearly twenty years, when he removed to Wallsend with his father, who had then attained considerable eminence as a colliery viewer.

The elder Mr. Buddle was a man of considerable attainments in mathematics; he was a correspondent of Hutton, Emerson, and other eminent men, and contributed many papers to the scientific publications of that period. He was remarkable for the systematic manner in which he conducted his professional avocations; and to him we are indebted for the introduction of iron tubbing for sinking shafts, which, it is believed, was first used at the Wallsend colliery.

At an early age Mr. John Buddle evinced an attachment for active occupation, and an eager pursuit of experimental knowledge. These studies and pursuits were encouraged by his father, from whom he derived nearly the whole of his education, having only been at school during one year, when very young. He became very early the assistant of his father as a colliery viewer; and on one occasion, when, as usual in cases of emergency, the viewers of different collieries were called together, to consult on the means of stopping an extensive fire of gas in the Washington pits, he suggested the trial of a jet of water moved rapidly, alternately, across the flame, in the same manner as in his boyish experiments he had cut off the flame of gas with a knife: the plan was adopted, and being carried into effect by himself, was perfectly successful.

After the death of the elder Mr. Buddle, his son succeeded him in the management of the Wallsend colliery, and there, in 1810, he introduced those extensive improvements in ventilation which have been so much imitated.

He was engaged as a viewer and consulting engineer of a number of the principal collieries in the North of England. His experience in all the details of the coal trade led to his being frequently examined as a witness in Parliamentary committees; and he was also employed as consulting engineer on railways and general engineering questions. In 1838 he was appointed one of the Dean Forest Mining Commissioners, and his tact and experience materially aided in the successful completion

For more Information on PDF Compression and OCR go to ThePaperlessOffice.